



# Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

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## State Agency & Partner Updates

Date: June 3, 2025

### Community Child Care Conversations

Community Child Care Conversations are currently paused, but sessions will resume in July 2025 with in-person events scheduled in Pasco, offered in both English and Spanish. Direct invitations will be emailed to all licensed providers in the Tri-Cities area. The [Community Child Care Conversations webpage](#) will also be updated with session details and information on the benefits of attending Conversations in your own region. For immediate provider support, please contact your licensor or email us at [dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:dcyf.communityengagement@dcyf.wa.gov).

The 2024 Summary Report is now available. The report captures the key insights, statewide trends, and provider feedback gathered during the forums. It also outlines actionable steps DCYF plans to take in response to the information received, reinforcing our commitment to continuous improvement and collaboration. [View full report here](#).

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### New DCYF Fingerprinting Services Coming Soon

In response to community and staff feedback—and with support from recent legislation—DCYF is expanding access to fingerprinting services in select rural offices.

Starting next week, services will be available by appointment for DCYF and DSHS applicants at the following locations:

- **Goldendale** (Region 2): 808 S Columbus St – begins **April 23**
- **Port Townsend** (Region 6): 2507 Evans Vista – begins **April 30**
- **Colfax** (Region 1): 418 S Main, Suite 2 – begins **May 1**

Appointments must be scheduled through the Idemia system after background check approval. Questions? Contact Ann Lemieux at [ann.lemieux@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:ann.lemieux@dcyf.wa.gov). Read [full message here](#).

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### Updates from the Early Learning Division

For the most recent updates from the Early Learning Division, read May's ECE's newsletter. It includes information on:

- WAC Updates/Licenses
- Early Achievers Updates
- Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Resources
- Upcoming events/celebrations

- And much more!

Link to newsletter: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADEL/bulletins/3dcf960>

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## **DCYF Rule Making Updates –**

**May 21, 2025**

### **Permanent Rules: Licensing Division Updates to Training Requirements**

Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Licensing Division filed [WSR 25-10-051](#) to finalize rule amendments regarding child care training requirements. The changes made were to correct grammatical errors and provide clarifying and consistent languages between the two chapters.

**May 29, 2025**

### **Proposed Rules: Licensing requirements for group care facilities**

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Licensing Division (LD) filed [WSR #25-11-095](#) on May 21, 2025, to open the public comment period on proposed rules amending Chapter 110-145 WAC Licensing requirements for group care facilities (GCF).

This rulemaking project aligns with the [D.S. Settlement Agreement](#), making these rules more developmentally appropriate and flexible to meet the needs of individual children and youth. The amendments to this chapter include updating the formatting and re-arranging many sections. While it may appear that the entire chapter has been repealed and replaced, many of the requirements remain the same. A crosswalk of the changes is available on the LD [Group Care Negotiated Rule Making Project page](#).

### **Submit Comments**

To participate in the permanent rulemaking process for these rules, the last day to submit feedback on the proposed rules is Tuesday, July 8, 2025. You can provide feedback using one of the following methods:

- [Submit your comments online](#).
- Email [dcyf.rulescoordinator@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:dcyf.rulescoordinator@dcyf.wa.gov).
- Call 360-972-5385 and leave a voicemail message. In your message, provide an email address so that we can respond to your comment.

Equal weight is given to all comments, whether they are made online, by email, or voicemail.

### **Questions?**

For questions about DCYF rules, or to request an alternate format for this information, please contact the DCYF Rules Coordinator at [dcyf.rulescoordinator@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:dcyf.rulescoordinator@dcyf.wa.gov).

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## **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)**

The Legislature passed ESB 5769 limiting Transition to Kindergarten (TK) funding beginning in the 2025-26 school year to 7,266 annual average full-time equivalent (AAFTE) students statewide. The bill also directs OSPI to collaborate with DCYF to develop a recommended plan for phasing in the TK Program.

Additional information from Early Childhood Special Education and Early Learning will be shared in the coming weeks.

To learn more, or if you have questions for OSPI, please contact Samantha Bowen at [samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us](mailto:samantha.bowen@k12.wa.us).

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## **Department of Health (DOH)**

### **Child Injury Prevention Coalitions**

- DOH has recently added 8 new counties to our coverage for Safe Kids coalitions for child injury prevention. Island, Skagit, Kitsap, Grant, Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Asotin counties through their Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs) are receiving funding for child injury prevention work related to traumatic brain injury awareness and prevention. This work ranges from child passenger safety, bicycle and pedestrian safety, sports concussion awareness and prevention, and drowning prevention. They may also address falls safety for the home and playground or farm and ranch safety. Each of the LHJs in these areas are working to establish their own local coalition through Safe Kids Worldwide. Questions about local coalitions and contacts can be directed to [safekidswashington@doh.wa.gov](mailto:safekidswashington@doh.wa.gov).
- Safe Kids Washington has been partnering with the Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Strategic Partnership Advisory Council and the Center for Brain Injury Research and Training at the University of Oregon to build an interactive website for parents, kids and teens to address areas of child injury. Our website at <https://safekidswashington.org> has a series of modules on a variety of child injury topics. Each module has a story or game to help teach ways to be safer while having fun, traveling, or relaxing. Lots of resources and information are available throughout the modules.

### **Free Water Testing for Child Care Programs**

- The Department of Children, Youth, and Families requires childcare and early learning programs in Washington state to test their drinking and cooking water for lead and copper when getting licensed and every six years after. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) offers a free mail-in water testing program that fulfills this [WAC requirement](#). Testing is also available for sites getting licensed for the first time and those in the Family, Friends, and Neighbor (FFN) network.
- DOH mails all needed supplies and instructions to sites to collect their own water samples and send them back to the lab for testing. If test results show lead levels are

too high, grant funding is available to reimburse providers for the cost of replacing fixtures that tested high for lead.

- For more information or to register for the free mail in water testing program, visit the [Lead in Child Care Drinking Water | Washington State Department of Health](#) Questions? Reach out to [leadfreekids@doh.wa.gov](mailto:leadfreekids@doh.wa.gov).

### **Maternal Child Health State Priorities and Action Plan**

- DOH's Office of Family and Community Health Improvement is currently working on our federal Maternal and Child Health Block Grant application for 2026-2030. The application includes a 5-year state action plan to promote child, youth, and family health and address issues that emerged in a recent statewide needs assessment process, such as family economic security and basic needs, health care access and quality, and social-emotional well-being and support. An overview of the proposed plan will be posted and available for public comment in **early July** on the DOH website [Maternal and Child Health Block Grant | Washington State Department of Health](#).
- **Contact:** For more information, please contact Astrid Newell and Angie Funaiolo at [astrid.newell@doh.wa.gov](mailto:astrid.newell@doh.wa.gov) and [angie.funaiolo@doh.wa.gov](mailto:angie.funaiolo@doh.wa.gov).

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### **Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)**

- On April 25, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service approved Washington's plan to operate the SUN Bucks program for the summer of 2025. SUN Bucks provides a one-time, \$120 food benefit to eligible school-age children who lose access to free or reduced-price meals during summer months while school is not in session. Benefits for automatically eligible children will be issued as early as June 2, 2025. Benefits for children who received SUN Bucks in 2024 will be issued to their existing card. A new SUN Bucks card will be mailed to newly eligible children. Households that no longer have their SUN Bucks card from last year can request a replacement for new card issuance. Children who do not automatically qualify may submit a SUN Bucks application at [sunbucks.dshs.wa.gov](https://sunbucks.dshs.wa.gov). To qualify for SUN Bucks, children must be enrolled at an NSLP or SBP participating school and live in a household that meets income requirements to qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Communication plans are underway to inform families and schools about SUN Bucks eligibility and benefit access.
- DSHS is pleased to share phased enhancements that will improve access to information and services through its Customer Service Contact Center's Interactive Voice Response system. Currently clients may need to go through many phone prompts to hear answers to their questions or information about their case or CSD services. They may have to wait for a navigator to assist them or route their call. This updated technology is intended to increase self-service capabilities for clients while our employees focus on delivering services that require an approach more tailored to clients' specific needs.

- Some of the Virtual Agent’s features include authenticating callers and routing calls through conversational language in English, Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese. Calls will be routed more directly based on clients’ reasons for calling. Many clients whose circumstances haven’t changed will be able to complete their Food-only, Mid-Certification Reviews via the Virtual Agent without holding for call agents. This service will be available 24/7 to help clients meet their reporting requirements.
  - DSHS’s Sunnyside Office has relocated from Yakima Valley Highway to 3302 Picard Pl., Sunnyside, WA 98944, just off Interstate 82 at exit 69, 1.6 miles from the former location. The Department of Children, Youth and Families, DSHS’s Office of Fraud and Accountability and the Developmental Disabilities Administration continue to share building space with the Customer Service Office. The CSO will continue to offer the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn program, increasing to two days a week, Mondays and Thursdays. The Lighthouse – Advocacy, Prevention and Education Center will also continue to provide advocacy services for people experiencing domestic violence.
  - For more information, please contact Christian Carvajal at [Christian.carvajal@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Christian.carvajal@dshs.wa.gov).
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### **Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA)**

- WDVA has published a Washington State Child Care Roadmap for Military Families in the state. It can be accessed here: <https://dva.wa.gov/childcarestakeholders>
  - WDVA hosts a monthly Stakeholder Convening for partners across the nation who work in the child care for military families space. More information at the link above. The next meeting will be June 10, and the topic will be demographics, population datasets, and quantifying need.
  - For more information, please contact Olivia Burley at [Olivia.burley@dva.wa.gov](mailto:Olivia.burley@dva.wa.gov).
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